



Museum in Drydock

The Aquatic Park Bathhouse building, home to the park's Maritime Museum since 1951, has been "drydocked" this year for much needed restoration. The building will reopen in 2009.

The Bathhouse building was built in 1939 as a joint project of the City of San Francisco and the New Deal Works Progress Administration, and is the focal point of the Aquatic Park National Historic Landmark District. This unique structure was designed in the Streamline Moderne style, a late offshoot of the Art Deco period that mimics the clean lines of an ocean liner.

After occupation by troops in WWII from 1941 through 1948, the building became home to the San Francisco Maritime Museum and the country's first Senior Center. The museum was operated by the San Francisco Maritime Association until it was transferred to the National Park Service in 1978.

Construction will take approximately three years, during which time her "upper hull and decks" (windows and roof) will be replaced, and her "hold" (the poured concrete bleachers and underground spaces) will be renewed and reinforced. The existing elevator will also be extended upward one more "deck" to improve public access to, and enjoyment of, this architectural work-of-art.

Although the Museum is closed, the activities of the San Francisco Senior Center will continue throughout the construction.

The work is needed because 67 years of driving winter rains and salt-laden summer fogs have taken their toll. Stainless Steel clad windows and doors are rusting from within, causing metal deformation, broken glass and water leaks. The waterproof membrane



Opening day of the Maritime Museum on May 28, 1951. Photo: Frank Ricci. Photos top right: Relief over the main door by artist Sargent Johnson and detail of the interior mural by artist Hilarie Hiler. Photos: NPS.

on the roofs has deteriorated over time, causing significant roof leaks. The reinforcing steel within the concrete amphitheater structures is corroding due to moisture saturation. Poorly designed original skylights have resulted in significant water damage to underground work spaces.

During the restoration project, the NPS will replace 90% of the windows and doors, and all of the roofs in the bathhouse building with new materials that match the historic originals. The concrete amphitheater structures will be repaired and the skylights replaced with modern copies that replicate the look of the historic ones. For more information please call the Visitor Center, 415-447-5000.